Burning to take place near Spooner Lake

The Nevada Division of Forestry will be conducting prescribed burns in North Canyon, near Spooner Lake, in the Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park backcountry throughout November, weather permitting.

Signs will be posted throughout the area when burns are being conducted. Nearly 150 acres will be treated in five treatment units.

The burns are part of ongoing fuels treatment and forest restoration efforts being conducted by the Nevada Tahoe Resource Team. The goal of the project is to create a healthier forest and to make the area more resistant to catastrophic wildfire.

The timing of the burns depends on optimum weather conditions and steps will be made to minimize the impact on park visitors.

For more information, call (775) 684.2500.

Mediterranean diet boosts mind and body

By Allison Aubrey, NPR

For all of us nearing middle age, or slogging through it, yes, there is a benefit in eating a Mediterranean-style diet rich in fish, nuts, vegetables and fruit.

A new study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine finds that women who followed this pattern of eating in their 50s were about 40 percent more likely to reach the later decades without developing chronic diseases and memory or physical problems, compared to women who didn’t eat as well.

Researchers tracked the dietary habits and lifestyles of more than 10,000 women, beginning in late middle age. Every two years, the women filled out detailed surveys describing their diets.

Over the next 15 years, researchers kept tabs on who among the women developed a whole host of chronic diseases including Parkinson’s, cancer, lung and pulmonary disease. The women were also given a battery of memory tests, and researchers also evaluated physical function, meaning the women’s abilities to move around and stay active.

“This really suggests that a healthy diet can help improve multiple aspects of your health and your ability to function when you’re older,” says Fran Grodstein researcher of Harvard School of Public Health.

Meir Stampfer, co-author of the new paper, says he was “surprised by the magnitude of the effects” in the study, given what we already know about the heart benefits of a Mediterranean style diet.

Read the whole story

Placer County cracking down

on DUI offenders

A $69,136 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety to the Placer County Probation Department will be making sure that worst-of-the-worst DUI offenders are complying with all court orders.

The grant will fund officers to intensely monitor drivers on probation for felony DUI or multiple misdemeanor DUI convictions. Supervision for these high-risk offenders will include unannounced home searches, random alcohol and drug testing and monitoring to ensure compliance with court-ordered DUI education and treatment programs.

The Intensive Probation Supervision for High-Risk Felony and Repeat DUI Offenders grant is aimed at reducing the number of people killed and injured in alcohol and other drug-related collisions in the county. In 2011, five people were killed and 221 injured in such crashes in Placer County.

The Placer County Probation Department will also collaborate with other local law enforcement agencies to conduct DUI/Driver license checkpoints and warrant service operations targeting individuals who fail to make court appearances after DUI arrests.

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2 S. Lake Tahoe murderers remain at-large

While the investigation into two South Lake Tahoe homicides

continues, the trail to the killers is getting colder.

“It’s very weird and unusual for our area,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News* of the unsolved crimes. “We continue to methodically make progress.”

Julian Acevedo Salvador, 28, of South Lake Tahoe was stabbed to death July 20 along Pioneer Trial after he was in an argument and then a fistfight with an unknown assailant.

Leads have taken detectives to Southern California and the Bay Area, but to no avail.

Working with SLTPD on both cases are El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department, El Dorado County District Attorney’s Office and South Lake El Dorado Narcotics Enforcement Team.

The other homicide occurred Aug. 6 when a gunman opened fire and killed USA gas station clerk Manpreet Singh, 27.

– Lake Tahoe News staff reporter

Skiers getting early start to the season

Mammoth Mountain opens today for the 2013-14 season.

Closer to Lake Tahoe, Boreal is open today from noon-8pm, Nov. 8 from 9am-9pm and future dates are dependent on weather.

The next chance for moisture in Tahoe is Monday, according to the National Weather Service. And that is likely to be in the form of rain.

Resorts have been taking advantage of the cold overnight

temperatures to make fake snow to cover the slopes so there will be skiing by Thanksgiving.

Here are some opening dates for Tahoe resorts:

- Heavenly – Nov. 22
- Kirkwood – Nov. 22
- Northstar – Nov. 22
- Squaw – Nov. 27
- Alpine – Dec. 13.

Resorts not listed have less snowmaking capabilities and are more dependent on Mother Nature.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Swanson enters El Dorado County supes race

By Kathryn Reed

Experience, knowledge and the ability to get things done are what Angela Swanson believes she would bring to the job of El Dorado County supervisor.

The 53-year-old officially threw her hat in the ring this week when at the Nov. 5 South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting she told her peers she would not be seeking re-election to that body but instead would be going for the county position in 2014.

When she isn't at the twice-monthly council meetings she is either at the Board of Supervisors meeting in Placerville or

watching it online. She believes in relationship building, and has been doing so on the West Slope to grasp a better understanding of countywide issues.



Angela Swanson

“District 5 is very different than in the past with the inclusion of the district going to Pollock Pines. We are no longer the lake district. We are the eastern end of El Dorado County,” Swanson told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We have to know how to play in the big sandbox.”

Swanson is entering her fourth year on the City Council. In the past three years she said, “I had to expand my base knowledge of Tahoe and El Dorado County to understand environmental politics, transportation, growth, development, management of public safety and fire, and more.”

She says her city appointments have helped her gain a breadth of knowledge. For two years she was on the California Tahoe Conservancy board, is in her third year on the Tahoe Transportation District, three years on the Cal-Tahoe Joint Powers Authority, and has been on the Waste Disposal board.

Swanson is also active in the League of California Cities. She is on the Transportation, Communication, and Public Works Policy Committee as well as the Women’s Caucus dealing with pensions.

Outside of the city responsibilities Swanson is part of Lake

Tahoe Collaborative, advisory board member of the Boys & Girls Club of Lake Tahoe and on the Lake Tahoe Educational Foundation board.

It is the latter role and that of being a council member that put her name in headlines in August 2012. The ed foundation accepted money from a man who had business before the council and who subsequently went to prison on drug charges. The District Attorney's Office has never filed charges nor exonerated her in that case, with DA Vern Pierson telling *Lake Tahoe News* there is still an active investigation involving Swanson.

Swanson said she has only spoken with Pierson twice in the last 15 months.

"My focus needs to be not on worrying about forces outside my control, but continuing to do what I have done since last August – come prepared, come with a plan, do hard work, and execute projects on behalf of the city at the policy level," Swanson said.

Prior to being elected to the council, Swanson was on the Lake Tahoe Unified School District board from 2005-09. She left before the term expired "to focus on my family after a job loss."

She is still working in school facility planning arena, though most of her emphasis is on grant writing projects.

The other declared candidates for the fifth district seat are Gerri Grego and Sue Novasel.

Opinion: Calif. wrong not to test students

By George Miller and Russlynn Ali

You don’t need a crystal ball to see America’s future. Just look inside California’s classrooms, where you’ll find 1 in 8 American children. How our country does tomorrow depends on how California’s schools do today. Will America be ready to compete? Are our students on track for success in college or career? Which schools are doing well and which need improvement?

Last month, Gov. Jerry Brown signed misguided legislation that makes all of those essential questions harder to answer. Under AB484, for the first time in nearly two decades, California won’t test all of its students, won’t provide data about student performance to parents, teachers or schools, and will not hold itself accountable for raising student achievement.

Brown and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson heralded AB484 as a modernizing move to implement the new standards known as the Common Core, adopted by California and 44 other states. The theory is that we should throw away the old tests and start a year from now with the new tests, but in the interim we’ll stop giving vital information to parents and students. AB484 effectively blindfolds educators during this transition at a time when it’s most critical to measure student learning to inform instructional change.

Thoughtful implementation of Common Core is an important issue facing states and school districts across the country. But eliminating testing, even if just for a couple of years, is not the solution. Other states such as New York, Kentucky and Massachusetts are working through this challenge by aligning their testing systems with the new standards and helping

parents understand that, with new assessments, initial drops in test scores are expected. They are making sure students are comfortable with new computer-based assessments, and are helping teachers get ready to use the new testing and evaluation systems, giving them several years before any consequences are tied to new assessments.

These states are making the difficult but necessary transition to higher standards without compromising on important values, like a parent's and a student's right to know how they are performing; a teacher's need to know which students deserve extra attention; whether the rights to equal education are being upheld for students with disabilities and English learners; and the state's responsibility to hold itself, its districts and its schools accountable for student achievement.

Elected leaders in California, instead, have chosen to fly blind for the next few years. And in so doing, they are defying the will of the people. According to a Rossier/PACE poll of California voters, 66 percent of parents with school-age children believe students should be tested in each grade to ensure they are progressing.

California annually receives more than $3.5 billion in federal funds designed to protect the civil rights of and promote educational opportunity for students. As part of its plan with the federal government to receive those funds, California agreed to assess students annually and report on the performance of poor students, students of color, students with disabilities and English learners. AB484 violates the state's agreements with the federal government, threatening access to the federal funds California relies on to serve its most disadvantaged students.

Worse still, the new law will force districts throughout the state to violate the nation's civil rights statutes, laws the Obama administration is required to enforce. Without the federal government as the guarantor of its people's civil

rights, progress toward equity has historically faltered.

Brown and the Legislature have restored America's largest state to fiscal solvency, even in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Depression. They deserve credit and our deepest gratitude.

However, we must have an honest conversation about our state's ability to provide a world-class education. California ranks 47th among all states in eighth-grade math, and 45th in fourth-grade reading – and the long-term consequences of drift and delay are incalculable. The Common Core provides the promise and the opportunity for California to again lead the country in education, but not if the state blocks access to student performance data, even for a couple years.

A year is a valuable time in a child's education. That's why we are standing alongside a coalition of California parents, advocates, civil rights leaders, educators and teachers coming together with our lawmakers to rethink AB484. They know this is no time for a blackout on student testing.

Californians have a choice. We can stop assessing our students and schools, and stifle progress, furthering the growing perception that our state's best public education days are behind us. Or we can transition responsibly to new, better standards and uphold California's education system as one that truly serves the needs of all children.

Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, is the senior Democratic member of the House Education and the Workforce Committee. Russlynn Ali is the chair of the Emerson Education Fund at the Emerson Collective in Palo Alto, and was the assistant secretary of education for civil rights in the Obama administration.

STMS Junior S Club members recognized



Front row: Mandy Kendall, SITS adviser; middle row Yazmin Betanzos, Jennifer Vasquez, Erika Remigio, Priscila Hernandez; back row Celeste Holmes, Susie Marx (STMS teacher club adviser), Gerogilllis Ortega, Annalyn Boothe and Zareth Rojas. Photo/Provided

Eight members of the South Tahoe Middle School Junior S Club and their school adviser received a special certificate last week from Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra.

SITS is the sponsor of the group.

The girls meet each week with the focus to identify ways that they can help and volunteer. They have taken on projects at their school, in the community, across the country, and even globally.

More info about the group is online.

Bowl to raise money for Tahoe animal group

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe is having a fundraiser at Tahoe Bowl. The money raised will keep the spay-neuter program going.

Bowl, dine and drink at Tahoe Bowl on Nov. 8 from 6-8pm. A portion of the proceeds will benefit ACT’s spay-neuter program and the El Dorado County Animal Shelter. There will also be a raffle.

Tahoe Bowl is offering a 20 percent discount on food.

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that raises funds to help local residents spay and neuter their dogs and cats in an effort to reduce the population of unwanted pets.

Email info@tahoeanimals.org for more information.

Paid parking may be decided

by S. Tahoe voters

By Kathryn Reed

Do the voters of South Lake Tahoe want paid parking?

That is a question a group of residents wants on the June 3 ballot. The goal if voters say remove the parking kiosks, is they would be uprooted 30 days later.

The legwork to get the initiative on the ballot started Wednesday. This is one day after the City Council heard a report from staff about how the program is working.

The names on the document given to the city Nov. 6 are Peggy Bourland, John Cefalu and John Grace.

A grassroots group called Tahoe4Tahoe is behind the initiative. Bourland, who is part of the group, would not say how many people are involved, nor would she say who they are. The group formed out of frustrations with the city in regards to paid parking.

Bourland told *Lake Tahoe News* the point of the ballot initiative is to give the people a voice in the parking decision, adding that the group believes the City Council acted against the will of most residents with the parking program that started this past summer.

However, the language on the "text of the initiative" is much broader than that and could limit the power of the city government.

The text says, "The people of the city of South Lake Tahoe do ordain that the city of South Lake Tahoe be prohibited from enacting any ordinance that would result in a tax, an assessment, a fee, or charge of any kind for the use of public streets for vehicle parking purposes." It ends with, "Any other ordinances or parts of ordinances of the city of South

Lake Tahoe in conflict herewith are hereby repealed."

The next step is for the city attorney to answer the "text of the initiative". Tom Watson has 15 days to write a legal summary that does not exceed 500 words and he must write a ballot title.

It is possible if a legal summary could not be written, that the petitioners would have to start over.

Assuming Watson writes the summary, the Tahoe4Tahoe group must publish the intent in an adjudicated publication, and then take that document to the city clerk. Then the group must get 926 valid signatures on the petition. If certified by the county elections department, it goes on the ballot.

"The way I look at the time frame, it is going to be really, really tight to get on the June ballot," City Clerk Suzie Alessi told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Bourland was of the belief it would not cost the city any money to put the initiative on the ballot. The truth is will cost between $10,000 and $20,000, according to Alessi.

The city was not expecting to have any election costs in June, just in November 2014. Because El Dorado County has issues on the June ballot the city would not have the burden of that entire election.

The fee to the city is based on a formula of the county tallying all of its election expenses, take the number of registered voters and coming up with a fee per voter that is then paid by the city.